

NEW
SERIES

FEBRUARY

VOL.
15

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR"

All the Year Round

a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

PART 87.

PRICE
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1876.

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CONTENTS OF PART LXXXVII.

No. CCCLXXV.	PAGE
GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.	
Book II. Chapter IV. Audrey's Narrative. Our	433
Mother's Kin	440
The Old Masters in Piccadilly	444
Gone Away. A Poem	444
Keane Malcombe's Pupil. In Seven Chapters.	444
Chapter I.	448
Royal Omens, Signs, and Portents	453
A CHARMING FELLOW. Chapter LIX.	453

No. CCCLXXVI.	PAGE
GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.	
Book II. Chapter V. Audrey's Narrative. Made-	457
line Kindersley	462
A Mahomedan Reformer	467
A CHARMING FELLOW. Chapter LX.	469
Chapter LXI. Conclusion	471
Learning to Cook. A Board-School Lesson	476
Keane Malcombe's Pupil. In Seven Chapters.	476
Chapter II.	476

No. CCCLXXVII.	PAGE
PHOEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.	
Chapter I. Dido House	481
Chapter II. Phoebe Dawson	487
A Strike in the United States	490
Keane Malcombe's Pupil. In Seven Chapters.	495
Chapter III.	495
Some Strange Reports	499
GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.	
Book II. Chapter VI. Audrey's Narrative. Un-	499
considered Trifles of the Past	499

No. CCCLXXVIII.	PAGE
PHOEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.	
Chapter III. Adelaide Cross	505
Writing to Conceal One's Thoughts	508
Snowdrops. A Poem	512
Keane Malcombe's Pupil. In Seven Chapters.	512
Chapter IV.	516
Chapter V.	520
Old Q	520
GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.	
Book III. Chapter I. Notes from Memory.	523
Widow and Mother	523

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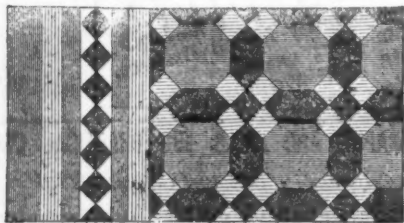
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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 375. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1876.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," &c. &c.

BOOK II. CHAPTER IV. AUDEY'S NARRATIVE.
OUR MOTHER'S KIN.

"I WAS unusually ready and willing to get up on the following morning, for excitement, novelty, anything interesting or out of the way, was of very rare occurrence at the Dingle House, and my head was not yet sufficiently filled with my own immediate concerns to admit of my being indifferent on the subject of the letter from Australia. I bustled about to get breakfast ready, and have everything comfortable, I supplied the teapot with a more than ordinarily liberal hand, and I glanced frequently at the clock on the mantel-piece, convinced that my father and Griffith were later than was their custom in making their appearance.

"At length—and at precisely their usual time—they came into the room together, and I perceived at once that they had already been discussing the subject which was uppermost in my thoughts. This vexed me a little; it put me at a disadvantage. My father was not easy to question, and he disliked making long explanations; he would not tell me, all over again, things he had previously told to Griffith. I should get them all out of Griffith though, that was a satisfaction, and it was the only one I had for some time, for my father ate his breakfast with great deliberation, and read his letters—of course there was a report from some society or other, about a plant with a long name, or an animal previously unheard

of, to protect the process—and Griffith resorted to the morning newspaper, though I could see that he was covertly enjoying my impatience all the time. I should have liked to ask out boldly, 'What is the Australian letter about?' but I did not venture to do so. Of course I was grown up, and it was very silly to hesitate about such a thing, but somehow or other I never felt, at that time, quite grown up, when my father was in question.

"At last my father concluded the reading of his letters, put them into the pocket of his dressing-gown, took off his spectacles, and addressed me.

"'Audrey, my dear,' he said; 'did I ever tell you anything about your mother's brother, Mr. Pemberton?'

"'Not that I remember, papa, beyond the fact that poor mamma had a brother, out in Australia.'

"'No, I suppose I did not. After all, there was not much more to tell, for it has not hitherto seemed probable that you and he would have any acquaintance with each other, or be brought in contact in any way. But I have had a letter, as Griffith has already told you, from your uncle, and it contains an announcement which is likely to have a considerable influence on your future life.'

"'On mine, papa! And how?'

"'I will tell you, my dear, in a very few words, and then Griffith can repeat to you as much of the family history as I have told him. Your uncle, Mr. John Pemberton, is coming home from Australia—from Sydney—with his second wife, and his daughter (she is his first wife's child), and he wishes to form family relations of the pleasantest kind with us, especially between your unknown cousin and yourself.'

"Oh, papa! how delightful! Is she my age, and what is her name? Why did I never know anything about her all this time?"

"You knew as much as I did, my dear, or nearly so. I had not heard anything of Pemberton for many years, and had nearly forgotten that he had a daughter. Her name is Ida, and I think she is a little older than you; somewhere between Griffith and yourself, I fancy."

"Ida! It is a beautiful name! I wonder is she very pretty? And are they coming to live here, papa?"

"Here? At the Dingle House, do you mean?" An amused smile crossed my father's face.

"Yes." I spoke rather apprehensively. A new cousin, with a beautiful name, must be on the spot to be a realisable good to me. "You said their coming would make a difference to me."

"So it will, but not exactly in that way. The Dingle House is all very well for us, my dear; but I fancy it would be a very dingy and dismal abode in your uncle's eyes, for he is a rich man, and your cousin Ida will be an heiress. He makes that plain in his letter, and I should think the last thing in his mind would be to settle down in a little place like Wrottesley, or its neighbourhood."

"I had not leisure just then to express, or indeed to feel, the extent of the astonishment with which my father's depreciatory manner of speaking of Wrottesley inspired me. It had never occurred to me that the place could be regarded in that light, and that my father could possibly be a silent sufferer from a restricted and circumscribed sphere. The impression of failure which his general aspect had produced upon me, ever since I had been old enough to understand it, had not extended to such lengths as that, and it was quite a revelation to me that it was deepened and quickened by the sudden glimpse of a prosperous and successful life, thus flashed upon him by the receipt of my uncle's letter."

"Not that there was the least bitterness in his tone, or the faintest touch of envy; these evil things had no place in my father's mind; but that it just enlightened me a little concerning his views of his own life and its missed possibilities. I knew that he had commenced his career with a fair amount of wealth, and an assured station to help him. I knew nothing of my uncle's beginnings, but it was easy to divine that

he had had neither; otherwise we should have heard of him long ere this, and not from the other side of the world."

"No, no," continued my father; "Pemberton means something very different from Wrottesley. What should you say to London, Audrey?"

"London, papa!" I exclaimed in delight, which to the young ladies of the present would seem ridiculous; for how could they take in the idea of life which had not in it at least an occasional 'run up to town;' a pleasure which had never been known to mine? "Do you mean that my uncle intends to live in London, and that I am to be there with my cousin sometimes? Is that in the letter?"

"That and a great deal more is in the letter, my dear; and I am heartily glad of it, for your sake. Your uncle is a fine fellow, Audrey, though he and I did not get on very well together long ago, which was much more my fault than his. And his return to England as the possessor of a good fortune by which he desires his sister's children to benefit, is a very lucky event in your lives. Indeed"—here my father smiled in a wistful fashion, which had something sad in it to my mind—"it looks as if he were coming back to prove his case against me by the most cogent of all human arguments—success; and, at the same time, to mitigate some of the evil results of my mistakes."

"This was really my father talking to me with a distinct remembrance that I was 'grown up,' but somehow it did not please me; perhaps because I was sufficiently grown up to have an insight into the pain that was under his guarded words. Griffith looked up quickly, and said:

"My dear father, neither Audrey nor I have anything to complain of in what you call your mistakes, and you must not point the moral of Mr. Pemberton's success in that way, if we are to be glad of it."

"My heart echoed Griffith's words, but I did not venture to speak. My father rose, and began to pace the room with his hands behind his back. There was a short pause.

"Well, well," he began again, "it is of no use to try back on the past, especially when one has not been so wise as one would believe oneself, and wish to be believed." Then, lifting and depressing his shoulders as though he threw off a great weight, he added: "You will be in a very different position from that which has hitherto

been yours, should your uncle carry out the generous intentions he has formed and which he hints at in his letter.'

"'Oh, papa,' I exclaimed, heedlessly; 'perhaps, after all, Griffith need not remain in the bank!'

"'Hush, hush, Audrey,' said Griffith; 'you are talking nonsense. It cannot make any difference in that respect. Mr. Pemberton means to be very kind, no doubt, and to have you to stay with his daughter, and share all her pleasures, but he cannot propose to alter the plan of our lives; and it could not be, even if he did propose to do so. We must not calculate on anything, beyond the vague good of having new relatives and a fresh interest in life, until Mr. Pemberton has arrived, and we know what sort of person he really is.'

"'You are right, Griffith,' said my father, in a tone of hearty commendation, 'and wise. It is useless to speculate upon the results of this strange renewal of intercourse between Pemberton and myself, after a separation of so many years; and to do so on the large scale into which Audrey's notions have already rushed, might, perhaps, lead to disappointment. But she may know, as you know already, that your uncle is disposed to be kind and generous to you, and to make the old ties quite whole again. I should give you his letter to read—both of you, I mean—only that a portion of it is strictly confidential, and must be seen by no eyes but mine. However, I may tell you that your uncle warns me to expect a further and more important communication from him by the next mail.'

"'He is evidently a businesslike personage,' said Griffith.

"'Evidently. I am to receive papers and letters next month, at the end of which, or the beginning of the month after, he intends to sail for England; the date of their departure from the colony is to depend on the choice of a ship. He purposes to come here in the first instance.'

"'Here!' I exclaimed. 'I thought you said the Dingle House would not do for them?'

"'Nor will it. Just think for a minute, my dear, and you will see we should not have room for them. But they can divide the party. Mr. and Mrs. Pemberton can go to the Castle Hotel, and you can have your new cousin here. But, considering the event in prospect is several months off, don't you think we are premature in dis-

cussing its details? Your imagination will have plenty of food for some time to come, Audrey, and you may exercise it safely in the direction of your cousin's good looks, for Pemberton tells me his daughter is remarkably like her mother.'

"'Did you know her?' I asked, eagerly.

"'Yes; long, long ago, in the early days of their marriage, which were the early days of my own. She was exceedingly lovely. Tall, slender, brown-eyed, dark-haired, with a very pretty figure, pleasant manners, and a charming voice.'

"'What a description! If our new cousin be really like such a woman, she will be a wonder among girls.'

"'And a decided novelty at Wrottesley,' said Griffith, lightly, and with a touch of scepticism in his tone which somewhat provoked me, for why should not the unknown Ida be everything her father's account of her implied? Griffith was all but faultless in my eyes, to be sure; but still, he did occasionally lack ideality, and he had an unaccountable tendency to slight, or, at least, to abstain from interest in girls in general, which irritated me to the extent of making me wish that he might fall in love, and so get cured of that provoking way of his. Of course, I did not mean seriously; I should have felt all the jealous annoyance of an only sister in such a case as that, unless, indeed, I had happened to have an exceedingly intimate friend, and Griffith had exhibited a disposition to fall in love with her—but just a little, enough to make him regard all women with different eyes, though not enough to render him unhappy, or to sever him from me.

"'There are pretty girls at Wrottesley, too,' I answered, rather hotly, 'though you may not think them worth looking at.'

"'Griffith was a little surprised at my petulance, and he misunderstood its sense.

"'I beg your pardon,' he said, laughingly. 'I made a very rude speech; but, indeed, I did not mean it. Look in the glass, and you'll know I couldn't.'

"'What nonsense, Griffith! As if I imagined for a moment you were thinking about me.' But I did glance at the mirror over the chimney-piece for all that; and I made a mental note that one's brothers never knew what one was like.

"'My father, who had taken no notice of our little squabble, now called Griffith to him, and I left the room as usual for the daily colloquy with Mrs. Frost, in which she suggested and I acquiesced,

which I called by the dignified term of my 'housekeeping.' This time I had news to give her. My father had not been beforehand with me, as he had been on the occasion when Griffith's destiny was arranged. It fell to my lot to tell Frosty the wonderful news about the unknown relatives who were coming to us over the sea, and the grand prospects that might arise for me out of the event. The communication was received with all the interest I expected, and with rather inconvenient curiosity, for Mrs. Frost immediately asked me a number of questions which I was not in a condition to answer, and which rendered me impatient for a talk with Griffith. That could not be had until the evening, and I had the intervening hours for the weaving of romances, in which my fair unknown cousin played a distinguished part.

"I speculated much concerning my uncle and his daughter. Of Mrs. Pemberton I did not make much account, which proved my ignorance of life and its ways. Had I had a little more experience, I should have known how all-important she must be in the future occurrences on which I was speculating; how completely it would probably rest with her, either to give my visions some measure of fulfilment, or to disperse them in black disappointment. But my father had barely mentioned her; I had asked him no questions about her, and, in her dubious capacity of second wife and stepmother, she did not vehemently interest me. There is generally something antagonistic in the minds of girls to those combined conditions; and in mine it was of a sturdy description, for I remembered very well the apprehension and indignation with which my small breast had been filled when, years ago, certain hints that my father might possibly marry again, and that I might find myself in the power of a stepmother, had come to my hearing, and made me exceedingly miserable. To the best of my belief, no such notion had ever presented itself to my father's mind, and his opportunities of forming such a design were of the most limited description; but it was quite enough to torment me that a piece of gossip on the subject should reach me—quite enough to inspire me with a feeling of aversion towards any woman who was a man's second wife, and his daughter's stepmother. If I had troubled my head—which it would have been wise of me to

have done—with the idea of Mrs. Pemberton at all, I should simply have made up my mind that she must be detestable, and probably strengthened my fancy picture by a combination of Ida and myself against the common and natural enemy. As it was, I strangely overlooked her.

"When Griffith came home that evening, I began upon the subject of Mr. Pemberton's letter.

"Griffith was as ready to talk about the new prospect which had come to interrupt the monotony of our lives as I could desire, and we had a long confabulation as we walked about on the lawn together that same afternoon. My father was busy all day writing—I concluded he was replying to Mr. Pemberton's letter—and I saw hardly anything of him.

"Of course there was a great deal to be imagined and conjectured about our unknown relatives; but the sum of information which Griffith had to impart was not important. He had been told by our father that Mr. Pemberton had gone out to the colonies very early in life, taking with him a young wife, and a sum of money which was moderate for those days, but in these would be regarded as quite insignificant. The brothers-in-law had not been very good friends. My mother's family, though eminently respectable, had none of the territorial importance which, at that time, attached to the Dwarries, and—how ludicrously impossible such a thing seemed to me and Griffith now!—my father was supposed to have despised John Pemberton's notions, and to have thrown cold water on the emigration scheme. After all these years he explained to Griffith that he had never meant anything of the kind, but had been himself a sanguine and unfortunate speculator, dealing, unhappily for us all, with larger means than those at John Pemberton's disposal, and annoyed because his wife's brother, a younger man than himself, would not adopt his dashing ideas of what might be done at home, but persisted in banishing himself. Distance, time, and the various events of their respective lives combined to part the two families; and, no doubt, the continuous disaster of my father's pecuniary affairs, and his early-reached, easily-submitted-to sense of failure came in aid of the severance. The game of life had played itself out variously in the hands of the brothers-in-

law. My father had lost, while John Pemberton had steadily won.

"'And now,' said Griffith, 'here's our uncle coming home, like the oncle d'Amérique of the French story, with bags of gold, and a fairy princess for a daughter; and there's my father, who was rather a big swell in the old times, with all his grandeur gone, and nothing left but encumbrances.'

"'Oh, Griffith! As if you were not better than bags of gold or fairy princesses to papa. And then, how much better our father has been to us than our uncle to his poor child. There's no second wife in our house!'

"'No,' said my brother, thoughtfully; 'but I don't think, by what my father says, my uncle did Ida any harm by marrying again. I believe my uncle's letter mentions Mrs. Pemberton as being a devoted mother to his girl.'

"'My dear boy,' said I, with the sarcastic dignity of superior intelligence, 'what else do you suppose he would say? Of course he would be anxious to make papa think as well as possible of Mrs. Pemberton.'

"I allowed that branch of the subject to drop then, resignedly admitting to myself that, superior as Griffith was to other people, there were just a few subjects on which he did not feel as strongly as I could wish.

"Our uncle, it appeared, recollected our names, and many of the anecdotes of our childhood, which his sister had told him in her letters; for a desultory sort of correspondence had been kept up until the death of our mother, and Ida was represented as looking forward with pleasure to the prospect of making our acquaintance. It would all be very pleasant when it should come to pass, and it would be especially amusing for us to draw mental pictures of this unknown relative, and to compare them, on her arrival, with the reality. I don't think either of us took a genuine interest in the notion of Mr. Pemberton, or attempted to idealise him.

"Then there was London to think about. I had never even seen the streets and the shops of that enchanted city; 'trips' did not consort with my father's means, or enter into his ideas; and I could not remember his having gone up to London himself more than two or three times since my childhood, when his return from a short excursion of the kind was signalled by his bringing me back a large wax

doll, with movable eyes and very spiral ringlets. I was to go to London with these unknown relatives, and 'to share Ida's home there;' such, reported by Griffith, were my uncle's words. They were enough to set a steadier head than mine on seeing visions and dreaming dreams, even without the aid of Miss Minnie Kellett's sympathetic comment upon them, which, I need hardly say, I sought without delay. Indeed, I had just then one or two other matters of importance, whereupon I wished to confer with my not very wise confidante; and though the news from Sydney was doubtless of greater magnitude than the other topics, it was less urgent. The arrival in England of my unknown relatives, with all the contingent advantages and pleasures comprised in that arrival, would keep as a subject of discussion; but I was not disposed to let the pleasure of telling Miss Minnie all about my first grown-up dinner-party—which was also the occasion of the first appearance at Wrottesley of any member of Lady Olive Despard's family, in the person of her brother, Lord Barr—be deferred until the zest of it should have gone off. And then, I had a not unnatural curiosity to learn some of those particulars about the recently-acquired inmate (Mrs. Kellett's lodgers were always called 'in-mates' by her and her daughter), which I knew, by old experience, she would be equally willing to impart.

"Miss Minnie Kellett was no longer officially attached to the Dingle House in the capacity of my governess. Was I not grown up? Had I not finished my education?—I should be sorry to be obliged to give a strict account of what it amounted to—and started in life as a candidate for all its possibilities? There was, however, one branch of study for which I really cared, and in which Miss Minnie was an efficient instructress—it was music. I think she had mainly learnt by dint of teaching, and she continued to give me lessons, and to play duets with me, though the grammar, dictionary, history, and handbook era had reached its close.

"What a thoroughly delightful gossip we had that day! It reached to the full the feminine ideal of that true womanly pleasure—'a good talk.' Miss Minnie Kellett had heard something about the dinner-party at Lady Olive Despard's. She had heard it from the new 'in-mate,' and she was as anxious to repeat

it, as I was to learn how the proceedings had impressed a stranger at Wrottesley.

"He is really an acquisition," so ran Miss Minnie's glib testimony; 'so exceedingly affable and well informed, that I do assure you ma and I quite regret we did not propose something in the way of board as a mutual accommodation; a thing, you know, ma has never done, and has the greatest objection to, as you may suppose people who have seen better days, and cannot bring themselves readily to accept companionship they don't select, would be sure to feel. But Mr. Lester is such an exception to the general run of young men, that his society, at breakfast for instance, would be a real pleasure. He came so kindly to see ma this morning, when Phoebe mentioned that she had one of her bad headaches, and he told us how nice you looked yesterday, and what a pleasant party it was. And so, my dear, Miss Kindersley was there, it seems, and Mr. Lester says she is quite beautiful! She must have improved a good deal in looks by living abroad.'

"She is very pretty indeed, but very quiet. She said very little to anybody, and nothing at all to me.'

"But of course you will be quite intimate with the Bank people, now that Mr. Griffith is in Kindersley's?"

"I don't think that follows at all, Miss Minnie," said I, rather crossly, for she was straying off the track on which I wished her to continue, and, somehow or other, the topic of the Kindersleys did not interest me just then; indeed, it irritated me. 'Mrs. Kindersley never took any notice of us, you know, and I suppose Miss Kindersley will not visit where her mother did not. Of course it is quite an accident that Griffith is in the same set; it is a sort of thing that could hardly happen to anyone else. For instance, there's Mr. Finlay—he's in a better position in the Bank than Griffith; he's his senior, you know—that's what it's called, Griffith told me—and he is not in any society at all. I daresay Lady Olive Despard never heard of him, and I don't think he even goes to the Lipscotts. Oh no; we shall do very well without the Kindersleys, and the Kindersleys will do very well without us. And so Mr. Lester thinks Miss Kindersley quite beautiful?"

"Yes, and so does Lord Barr—and oh, my dear, there's a real gentleman for you! Something like a lord! I'm sure he's the nicest of noblemen.'

"Why where did you see him, Miss Minnie?"

"See him! At the house, of course; he's for ever in and out after our inmate. Such friends as they are! He has only been four or five days at Despard Court, and he's been down to see Mr. Lester I don't know how often. You know they were out among the savages and the volcanoes together, and Mr. Lester saved Lord Barr's life in some dreadful place—not as a doctor, but as a friend, I mean; and they call each other Ted and Will, just like brothers. He came to breakfast this morning with our inmate, and he said to Phoebe, in such a pleasant way, 'Couldn't Mrs. Kellett be coaxed to lend me a latch-key, for I'm sure you will be tired of opening the door for me?' And ma heard him, and actually went out into the passage, and took the liberty of telling him he could come in through the shop when he thought proper. Now you know that's not a thing one could do in a general way. And he was so pleased and hearty about it, and he told ma he had heard of her long before he came to Despard Court! And,' added Miss Minnie, irrelevantly, 'he's so handsome; don't you think so?"

"I could not answer this question off-hand, for, although I had regarded Lord Barr with curiosity and interest, both as the brother of Lady Olive Despard and the first real live lord whom I had ever seen—an individual entitled to cut out 'the officers' in social importance—his face had not made a particular impression on me. I had a general notion that Lord Barr had bright blue eyes, a florid complexion, and a merry smile; but I had not thought about his looks, and I gave such a half-hearted assent to Miss Minnie's question, that she looked quite affronted.

"Well, my dear, all I can say is, you must be hard to please, if you don't think Lord Barr a handsome man. I'm sure Captain Simcox is no more to compare with him than——'

"Oh!" said I, hastily, 'I was not thinking at all of Captain Simcox. I don't admire him at all now; indeed, I think I used to go on with great nonsense about him; and, of course, I do think Lord Barr is very nice-looking—only rather too fair, I should say—don't you think so?"

"That's a matter of taste, you see; and, of course, you like them dark, Mr. Griffith being dark; but I never saw a nicer-looking man than Lord Barr, to

my mind. Not romantic, of course; but thoroughly kind-looking and homely, and an easy way with him, as if everything must go right with him, and everybody do just as he likes—out of persuasion, you know, not an ordering way.

"I know; the kind of manner that Miss Lipscomb calls 'the ease of the aristocrat.' When I see him again, I will be sure to notice him more particularly, for I see he has made a conquest of you."

"Miss Minnie simpered. But I had no especial fancy for talking of Lord Barr. I wanted to tell her the news, and did so when she came to a pause. She received the communication with all the interest which I had anticipated, and with the pleasure on my account which belonged to her really affectionate disposition. Miss Minnie's head might have been clearer and steadier with advantage, but her heart was sound, staunch, and tender.

"I never heard anything so delightful in my life," she exclaimed. "It entirely changes your prospects in life, and very much for the better. Just fancy having a wealthy uncle, with a beautiful only daughter, living in a fine house in London, to go to! Why, you'll be a belle of the season, and you'll have carriages and horses, and go to balls, and be among all the people of fashion; and, very likely, you'll make a grand match."

"I don't want to do anything of that kind, thank you, Miss Minnie," I said, almost angrily, and with the strangest feeling of discomfiture.

"Of course, I don't mean merely a good match; I know you wouldn't marry anyone for whom your heart had not spoken; but think of the opportunities you will have of meeting people quite different from anything here."

"We had already strayed an immeasurable distance from the officers, and my hero with the ready-gathered laurels and the becoming scar had vanished into oblivion.

"Yes, I daresay; but never mind about that. I am wondering what kind of person my cousin Ida Pemberton is, and whether we shall get on well together. Papa, and my uncle, and Griffith too, take it all for granted, I suppose. They think we are just two girls, and sure to agree; but I don't think that is always so. One does not always like people because one ought, and because they are near at hand; and she and I may not like one another at all, you know. I daresay she

is not a bit like an English girl, and as they are such rich people, and she is an only child, I suppose she has been spoilt and indulged, and she will think me very humdrum and stupid."

"My mood was changing; my spirits were going down.

"Indeed, I'm sure she will think nothing of the kind. When are you stupid and humdrum, I should like to know? Not when I see you, I can bear witness; and not when others see you, by all accounts. By all accounts you were the life and soul of the Lipscomb's party, and Mr. Lester told my mother you danced like a fairy."

"Did he? I did not dance much with him."

"Depend on it, your cousin will be charming, and charmed with you, and with the Dingle House, and everything."

"I wonder what she will think of Griffith?" said I, the idea striking me for the first time. "I wonder what my uncle will think, when he finds my father's only son in a bank—he knows nothing about us at present, and he remembers when the Dwarries were very different from what they are now. My first idea was that it might make a difference about Griffith, but papa and he tell me that is impossible. I don't understand how men feel about things of that kind, but I should have thought it would have been so nice for my uncle to make an officer of Griffith. If he's so full of interest about us all, why shouldn't he do what he has the money to do and we have not?"

"Miss Minnie had nothing to say in answer to this remark of mine; she merely shook her head. But one result of our conference, which did not end here, was a lovely idea which occurred to her, and which she suggested to me—that the endowment of my brother Griffith by my unknown uncle with an adequate fortune—the easiest thing in life, as it seemed to us women—was not the only way in which things might be made delightfully easy and comfortable for the Dwarries family.

"What would be more natural and likely, you know," suggested Miss Minnie; "only be careful, my dear, and never let him suspect you of any such notion. Men are the real 'kittle cattle,' though they say it of us."

"It was at this moment, when Miss Minnie's 'music lesson' had been prolonged to three times its natural duration, that Frosty came to look for me, in a great

state of fuss, and announced that visitors had arrived, and that I was required immediately in the drawing-room.

"The visitors were Mr. Kindersley and his daughter."

THE OLD MASTERS IN PICCADILLY.

If one, in a dream about art, were offered by a good spirit a spell to call together some of the best pictures of Hogarth, Reynolds, and their contemporaries, the pictures he would summon would include, it is certain, many of the very pictures here brought together by the interest and exertions of the Royal Academicians.

Our best English pictures are so shut up in private collections, that it is seldom one can get any collective view of them, and oft of twenty persons who know Raphael, and have seen Michael Angelo's greatest works, there are not three who have really studied the work of Hogarth's prime, or the choicest efforts of Reynolds's brush. We get an impression of caricature and grossness from the inferior pictures of Hogarth; of rough generalisation from Reynolds's; and of flimsiness from Gainsborough's; and, perhaps, carry through our lives this very unjust estimate of our early art. To complain that two-thirds of the pictures in this exhibition are portraits is just, but that is simply saying that our early artists were compelled to live by portrait-painting; and certainly, since Vandyke's time, no other nation has carried that branch of the art farther, nor is the painting a face, and investing it with beauty and intelligence, by any means a low province of painting.

We all know how hard our art found it to emerge into the light, except by ministering to individual vanity, and the incessant cravings of affectation. In Hogarth's time the Italian masters (little really understood by the bewigged and bemused cognoscenti who harangued upon them) held a high and unattainable rank in the English mind and market. The Caracci and disciples of all the lower schools of painting were dominant in every drawing-room, and the bulk of the minor collectors expended their guineas on Ruysdael, Cuyp, Teniers, Berghem, and those Dutch masters who finished highly, and painted common objects with the delicacy of miniature painters. Any idea that new paths in art could be opened, that art-land had not

been thoroughly traversed, never entered the minds of the Sir Plumes of William and Queen Anne's time. When even our great portrait-painters were foreigners, any thought that English dell or mountain, English lake or river, contained beauty that Ruysdael never dreamt of, never arose even in the dreams of the English patrons of Claude and Vanderfelde in Walpole's age. The cromlech builders were not more ignorant of Greek temples, or the carver of an African fetish of the Apollo Belvidere, than these men of nature. Portrait and Dutch landscape reigned supreme, and the reflex of them we see in the poems of the time—cold, stiff, and artificial.

As foreign art in England commenced with Holbein, so did real indigenous art commence with Hogarth; an art not, perhaps, endowed with the pure simple faith of Giotto and Fra Angelico—a lower and a grosser art, indeed, but still earnest, living, technically beautiful, and original. To Vandyke, the Dutch Kneller, and the German Lely, succeeded, in due time, Hogarth, and then English art arose. He was the first real thinker in English art.

In this exhibition you see this sturdy limner at his best. Here are some of the finest pictures that came out of his studio in Leicester-square. No wonder that Dr. Wagen once mistook one of his portraits for one of Reynolds's, for, at his best, his heads are so solid, so full of colour, so full of mind and character. He had no very refined or subtle sense of female beauty, yet his Peg Woffington is a beautiful embodiment of a frank, careless, laughing Irish girl. Peg wears a broad hat that droops gracefully over her eyes, and a fall of lace encloses her smiling face. The hat throws a broad mellow shade over her good-natured brow and saucy nose, while her little full mouth is rosy in the full daylight. Some pink and blue dress, prettily blended, add to the fine colour and rich tone of a delightful picture painted with evident enjoyment. That Peg was a mischievous, laughing, fascinating hussy, who can doubt after this picture? Hogarth's portrait of his wife is also, in its way, perfection. Sir James Thornhill's daughter is not by any means a beauty, but good sense and amiability unite in a firm, comely visage, beautifully radiant in colour and instinct with life. Hogarth's large picture of Garrick writing, and his wife, with an arch smile, stealing the pen from his fingers, is also an admirable work,

but coarser in colour and execution than those which we have already mentioned. The furtive side smile of the actor is admirably conveyed, and there is a laughing mischief in the eye of his wife. But more interesting than these, and far more delicately and solidly painted, is Hogarth's early picture of a representation of the Beggar's Opera at the Lincoln's-inn Theatre. The stolid Macheath, in gold and scarlet, heavily ironed, stands calmly between his two weeping mistresses, one of whom is the Miss Fenton who soon afterwards married a duke. The bystanders are all celebrated people. The faces are somewhat mannerised, but are, no doubt, exact likenesses. The touch is fine as that of Teniers, the painting bright and clear as that of Jan Steen. This is a painter to be proud of indeed, and Gay must have exulted at such a record of his triumph.

And now we turn to Reynolds—no satirist, and with no power of telling a story, but an intellectual and vigorous painter of great men's and beautiful women's portraits—a painter who had studied deeply in the galleries of Rome, Florence, and Venice, and, deeper still, from nature—a man who never thoroughly mastered the laws of form; but, for all that, produced intellectual works—an artist whose eye for colour was divine, and who gave a larger and freer style to our whole art, urging students to study in a way to avoid his own defects. Unable to invent, Reynolds delighted to paint his more beautiful and less particular female sitters as nymphs and goddesses, throwing in a few "properties" in the foreground, to express their attributes. Of these idealised portraits we have a fine specimen in that of Miss Morris as Venus. This beautiful girl was the daughter of a West Indian governor, who, being reduced to poverty by the death of her father, came over to England and appeared as Juliet at Covent Garden. Dressed as a Grecian nymph, and not overlaid, she leans back against a tree, and holds Cupid to her bosom. She has rich auburn hair and a brilliant complexion, to which Sir Joshua's brush has given the bloom of undying youth. Two rosebuds are oddly stuck in the shadow. This poor maiden, beautiful as an April daybreak, failed entirely on the stage through nervousness, and died soon after of consumption.

But for calm, stately beauty, commend us to the portrait of Mrs. Nisbett as Circe—an ambitious picture of a celebrated

actress and beauty of the day. Clad in white, this lady sits erect and calmly dignified, her magic wand slanting from her hand. A monkey in the tree, a rather lumpy leopard, and a white cat are her attendant sprites. She looks as if she had just emerged from a big white lily.

As a contrast to this, and as one of Sir Joshua's best moments, let us take Mrs. Abington as Miss Prue, one of the most fascinating and charming of the president's wonderful female portraits. Mrs. Abington is not strictly a beauty; her nose is too small, her upper lip too broad and long; but she possesses to perfection the secretive spirit and humour of the true actress, and, as she leans over the chair-top, with her thumb-nail, mischievously innocent, touching her mouth, the old charm of her acting arises before us. You feel that, at a moment, when the grave old man or the shy, respectful lover is gone, she will break into a fit of irresistible laughter.

For every shade of grave courtliness, dignity, and chivalrous self-respect, the portraits here show that none of our portrait-painters excelled Reynolds. Whatever the face and bearing he saw, he could reproduce; sometimes, no doubt, heightened by his own intellect and wish to please, though he was no flatterer. Even Thurlow, who "looked wiser than anyone ever was," with his firm face and arched, black eyebrows, grew grander before Reynolds's easel; and about his Barré, Dunning, and Shelburne there is an intellectual force that surely needed an equal mind to convey to the canvas its subject. In this painter's pseudo-classical manner we have his Hon. Mrs. Bouverie, of Delapré, and child. This lady was the intimate friend of Mrs. Crewe, the great Whig toast of the day:

To buff and blue
And Mrs. Crewe,

whose health an enthusiastic Whig once drank from one of her shoes. Of Reynolds's own illustrious friends, we have Garrick as Kiteley, in Ben Jonson's capital play of *Every Man in his Humour*. Garrick was then fifty-two, and Reynolds has given perfectly the sour, drawn look of the jealous man whom Shakespeare's great friend has painted so admirably. It is Garrick with his stage face on. For a quiet portrait, full of character, that of Sir John St. Aubyn, Bart., is an excellent example; the expression is acute and full

of life; the face is glowing with rich colour, subdued by time; and the lapelled coat is treated with a certain style that indicates strongly the gentleman. Nor must we forget, among the beautiful, though not too virtuous, sitters of Reynolds, Kitty Fisher, representing Cleopatra dissolving the pearl. The languid eyes of this "bold and extravagant queen" Reynolds has given admirably, as she drops the pearl into the rich goblet. The colour of this picture is very rich and melting. Kitty Fisher, like many of Reynolds's frail beauties, is not strictly beautiful; she has a very retroussé nose, and a by no means perfect face. But Reynolds knows how to invest features with a natural sentiment, a grace, and tenderness that probably did not exist in the actual sitter. The dignity that Reynolds could throw over rather hopeless subjects, yet without flattery, is well shown in his portrait of Richard, first Lord Edgecumbe, with a wolf-hound. This we should take as one of his early Devonshire subjects. The first lord was a worthy, stolid sort of man, with a face as broad as it is long, and the big dog, jumping up, is cleverly but roughly struck in. Of Reynolds's rougher and harsher portraits, those of John Paterson, Master of the Barbers' Company and Chairman of the Blackfriars Bridge Committee, is a good honest specimen. Reynolds gave most of his sitters a geniality and good sense, which was sometimes only the reflection of his own mind. The portrait of his friend, Lord Boringdon, is very hearty and genial; nor must we forget the Laughing Girl, one of those portraits of children painted, perhaps, rather for pleasure than profit, which became, in his hands, typical and poetical. The auburn-haired child, with arms resting on a gate, peers forward, with half-shut eyes, innocently crafty. The upper part of the picture (perhaps from a series of experiments in colour) has grown into a mass of paint that makes it look like alto-relievo. It is much imperilled from the experimental and dangerous mediums which Sir Joshua tried, one after the other; yet the colour is still beautiful and masterly. Of his children's portraits, the Hon. Frances Harris (afterwards Lady Frances Cole) is a pleasing example. The child is so well-bred, yet so innocently careless, and the reddish dog carries out the colour of her rich auburn hair.

When we turn to Reynolds's fascinating rival, that less-learned and less-solid

painter, Gainsborough, we see a manner the very opposite to Sir Joshua. Light, swift-sketching Gainsborough always pleases. There is a pleasant wilfulness and spontaneity about his touch, which, though it sometimes imparts a look of flimsiness and careless taste to his pictures, gives them, also, a grace and individuality that we find in none of his contemporaries. Reynolds, though of a higher ambition, builds up his heads with laborious care. Gainsborough seems to breathe upon the canvas, and they flash up as in a mirror. Reynolds's portraits were often returned as unlike, and purchasers loudly complained of the fleeting colours, that have now rendered many pictures of value, like those of the Berkeley family, mere ghostly shadows. Gainsborough seems to have aimed lower, and to have refrained from pigmentary experiments. He attempted no imitations of the old masters, like Reynolds; yet, like him, was fond of painting children. The Cottage Girl is a pretty instance of this class of half-portrait subject; and he was bolder with his landscape backgrounds than Sir Joshua. Gainsborough's portraits of the Earl of Radnor's family are excellent for life, truth, and firmness; but, after all, it is in women that he especially excels. Mark his Lady de Dunstanville. There is a piquancy and sensibility about that face which Reynolds never reached. The lady wears a yellow dress, and holds a drooping white feather in one hand. The enormous broad-brimmed black hats, worn at this time, are skilfully used by Gainsborough; and he throws more subtlety into the face than Reynolds. His versatility, too, is great. Nothing can be more full of life and vivacity than his big Pomeranian dog. His cattle are excellent, and his landscapes rich in colour and true to nature. He is not so solid as old Crome, or so grand as Wilson; but there is a certain charm about his trees and country lanes that you find nowhere else.

There is a foolish old story that Gainsborough could never paint Garrick, and one day threw down his pallet and brushes in despair of catching the expression of a Proteus. This is certainly untrue, for of all the likenesses of Garrick there is none more vivid and vivacious than that of Gainsborough's, painted for Stratford. The actor in full dress, blue and scarlet, stands, with one arm round a bust of Shakespeare, the stony face looking down upon him with a gracious smile of approval. Garrick, with legs crossed and the light of genius in his

eyes, is self-conscious but perfectly natural. The background is said to represent a favourite haunt of the actor near his villa at Hampton. There is a playful audacity about this picture that is eminently characteristic of Gainsborough, whose animal spirits were high and whose nature was bright and sunny. With all his rough bonhomie, Gainsborough, however, could be courtly; his full-length portrait of Queen Charlotte is a masterly example of looking at the best side of things. The enormous German mouth is pinched into the sweetest smile, the small eyes shine, and with careless cleverness the painter has swept in the gauzy gown and the gold spangles. The full-length of the Duke of Cumberland is less successful. The duke is handsome, but he walks like a dancing-master, and there is something cold and crude about the colour of the whole. In the portrait sketches of honest Queen Charlotte and three of the princesses, Gainsborough, pleased with his sitters, has again excelled. Nothing more sparkling and piquante can be conceived than these sketches, and by animation of eyes, fine complexion, and royal manner, the painter has produced four delicious pieces of flattery, which are still as fresh and bright as the day they came from the easel. A very charming sketch (for it is little more) is the Mall in St. James's Park in the summer of 1780 (the year of the Gordon riots). There are beaux and belles on both sides of this swift, joyous sketch, and down the centre of the Mall comes a group of the leading beauties of the day, looking like swans as their white gauzes float them along. A graceful portrait of Perdita by this same artist should not be overlooked.

There is a great falling off when we turn from Gainsborough to Romney, though Romney had grace too, a quick eye for beauty, and a spark of genius about him. His portrait of Lady Hamilton in youth—perhaps while still a maid-servant—is painted with a careless taste that probably Romney considered a necessary attribute of genius, so the drapery has no folds, the flesh no half tints. Nevertheless there is great beauty and sensitiveness in the half-turned face, and a sentiment that greater painters do not always attain.

Opie's strong, coarse likenesses do not bear the juxtaposition of Reynolds. Yet they have the air of inveterate truth, and are vigorous and honest. The Red Boy, in a skeleton suit of red, playing at cricket,

is a painful specimen of his art, but there is much pomposity and true character about his Old Housekeeper of Sir J. St. Aubyn's, with her vast pillow of a head-dress. Perhaps the strongest of his portraits here is that of Sir John St. Aubyn, Bart., which has character and quiet dignity.

Of the brilliant flashy portraits of Lawrence there are not many examples. The Colonel David Markham is spirited; but his great work here is the really grand group of portraits of the Baring family, which, though slighter and more feminine than Reynolds, is almost as effective. It is a wonderful apotheosis of a merchant's family. The two figures, bending over the map to discuss some great commercial scheme, are finely treated, the faces are vivid and life-like, but the sort of protesting expression of the seated man we do not quite comprehend. Still, somehow, beside Reynolds even this looks like water-colours.

Phillip's excellent portrait of Byron, so well known by the engravings, strikes us as being coarser than it came out on the steel. The lips are larger and the mouth much less refined. Of Cosway's dainty trickery the portrait of Viscountess Melbourne is a fair example; but what a poor fan-mount work it is with all his daintiness!

To turn from portrait art, let us give a glance at bombastic Fuseli. With him everything is overdone and inflated. The Buckbasket scene with Falstaff is below contempt; and as for the Witch scene in Macbeth, it is the greatest caricature that was ever produced—the faces and attitudes are so outrageous, the want of common sense so palpable. In *Psyche* passing the Fates there is neither colour, drawing, nor meaning. Yet this man was one of the great teachers of our art-youth, and wrote patronising lectures about Titian and Michael Angelo!

In the midst of sturdy, rough Constables; smooth, old-fashioned Callcotts; calm, grand old Wilsons; and dashing Gainsboroughs, Turner's *Lowther Castle* stands out immortal. This picture, painted for the Earl of Lonsdale at the culmination of the painter's best period, shines like a sun over all the other landscapes around it. In the foreground are Turner's usual spindly trees; beyond, a stream painted to perfection, the water so clear that it reflects everything. High up on the hill is the castle, radiant in the sunlight, which glows in the water, and through the leaves of the trees and bushes. No private

person should allow himself such a treasure, it is too good for anyone but the whole world. Never was picture so penetrated, so steeped in light as this! As you look, the leaves grow transparent, the sunshine passes through. It is an effect of the transforming power of sunlight that, to any other painter, would have seemed as hopeless to reproduce as an Apocalypse vision. Look from this great vision at Berghem or Ruysdael, and see what mere masses of paint the Dutchmen have thrown together! Look at Claude, with his stiff and artificial temples, hard, mechanical waves, and mannered sky. Cuyp truly steeped his pictures in golden light; but there is no such magic in Cuyp as there is in the work of this great unconscious poet. We might challenge the world to match this landscape. Compare it with that splendid impudence of Rubens, the huge blue diagram of the mountains round the Escorial, or the measured dullness of the ripples on Claude's Venetian shores!

The careless, easy power of Morland is well shown in his large and unfinished picture of the Roadside Inn; while a Sea Piece gives one an excellent notion of the skill and manner of George Chambers. Barker, of Bath, paints with much truth and vigour; and as for old Richard Wilson, his great blue mountains, either in Wales or Italy, have always a quiet, tranquil, reflective grandeur and breadth that renders them pleasing.

Every one (we may say, in bringing to a conclusion this brief sketch of a very notable exhibition of pictures) who wishes to form something more than a passing acquaintance with English art at its best, should, by all means, pay a visit to the old masters in Piccadilly.

GONE AWAY.

THE winter wears the old pure dress you used to love so well,
The snow lies dazzling in the sun, on moorland, hill, and fell;
Gay clad in silver tracery stands every leafless tree,
High pile the drifts of frozen white on meadow, land, and lea;
The robin that you always fed lights on the ivy spray,
Your dog lies wistful at your door, but you are gone away.
The yule-log crackles on the hearth; out in the moonlit snow,
The waits are singing the same songs we echoed long ago;
With a pale mimicry of mirth, old customs, one by one,
Are followed through the Christmas hours as you would have them done;

The ancient feast the children hail, and play the ancient play,
But even through their laughter sigh that you are gone away.

Life will resume its quiet course, by cloud or sunshine crossed,
And only for one heart remain, "the sense of something lost;"

They will pass on, the dated days, close held in love's fond keeping,

And Spring will call on leaf and flower, to wake them from their sleeping.

You prized the yearly miracle that Nature works in May,

The buds will blow in England, Dear, but you are gone away.

Gone from the happy intercourse of kindred heart and mind;

Gone from the daily round that used its joys in you to find;

But from the longing, yearning love, the clinging thought and prayer,

The fond recurring reference, the tender thought and care,

From the dreaming of the lonely night, the memory of the day,

Dear, from all this, and more than this, you are not gone away.

KEANE MALCOMBE'S PUPIL.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

It was one of the first warm days of early spring, the day on which I, Mabel Meredith, (called "Mab"), completed my twenty-ninth year.

Now some tell us that spring is a "glad" time, a "joyous season;" but can we feel it so, when we look on the awakening life all around us, the fresh dawning beauty of tree and flower, and remember that our youth, the spring that comes but once in each life, is passing by? To a single woman, thirty is a sort of barrier, a fence marking the furthestmost boundary of youth, and to this boundary I am perilously near.

Some such thoughts were in my mind, as I wended my way down the long lane to Abbeylands. In every nook and crevice of the low stone walls that edged the lane, tiny green things were waking into life; little tender bundles of velvety leaves, and soft fluffy curled-up balls, told of baby-ferns, soon to grow tall and fair, and wave brave green banners in the summer sunshine; here and there sharp pale green shafts pushed upwards through the moist earth, and told of a glowing orchid stirring in its sleep deep down in a buried bulb; and in the distance I could see a faint tinge of pink upon the trees, and I knew the rosy green-tipped buds were swelling into springtide life.

The long lane led from Whitegates, where Aunt Janet and I lived in peaceful

content, to Abbeylands, the "great house" which was the glory of our village. You could see the massive grey-stone gables of the old house peeping through groves of pine and beech trees, as you stood on the lawn at Whitegates; and when first I came from India, a little strange motherless creature, it was one of my great delights to wander as far as the big gates; to squeeze my pale little visage in between the bars, stretch out my thin arms, and clap my hands to startle the little soft brown rabbits that nestled in the long grass, and glanced up at me so quickly with ears erect and great frightened eyes.

I think it took Aunt Janet all the rest of her natural life to quite realise the fact of my existence at Whitegates—for to the staid, methodical Scotchwoman, whose life knew little change, and whose quiet days were as like each other as a row of beads upon a string, it was a startling revolution to hear me tearing down the wide low stairs, that led from the white-stoned entrance-hall to the delicious old-fashioned drawing-room, built out like a turret at one end; or to come upon me, curled up cat-wise, in a corner of the deep-cushioned seat that ran all round the big window, my black kitten cuddled in my arms, and a pair of curious brown eyes looking fixedly at her from a bush of wavy hair. This hair was the sad occasion of many troubles, for Aunt Janet would comb it back, as smooth as its curly nature would allow, and carefully pack it away into a brown silk net, congratulating herself upon the child's neat appearance, only to find me half an hour afterwards, with a perfect gooseberry bush of frizzly tresses flying out behind me, tearing after kitty down the sloping lawn. At the white gate, from which our cottage took its name, stood a great dark fir-tree; and here I spent many a pleasant hour, seated in solitary grandeur beneath its shade, and telling stories to myself and kitty, about a little tiny brown squirrel that used to peep down at us from his perch among the branches.

A simple Scotch lass, Nannie by name, had replaced my poor ayah, for whom I wept so bitterly, when she returned to her own country; and it is a strange proof of how the mind of a child forms its own conceptions from external objects, that when Aunt Janet, on Sunday afternoons, administered to me what she called "a diet of scriptural instruction," and told me of angels in heaven, I straightway

conceived of these ministering spirits as black, because—poor little motherless child that I was!—the best love and care that I had ever known had been that of my faithful ayah, whose dark face I had so often found bending over me when I awoke from sleep. The horror that Aunt Janet and Nannie experienced on the discovery of my heterodox ideas, is one of the most vivid of my child-memories.

"It's a fearfu' thing," said Nannie, with hands and eyes upraised, "to hear the puir wee lammie talking o' the Lord's blessed angels as if they were deils!" but all unabashed, I looked gravely from one to the other, and still clung lovingly to the idea of one black angel, though all the others were white! Aunt Janet looked mournfully at me over her spectacles, and was evidently puzzled as to what she should make of the new arrival at Whitegates.

The plain explanation of my appearance was this:

My mother, Miss Fraser's only sister, had married an officer in the Indian service; she died in India when I was born, and my father, heart-broken by his loss, could not bring himself to part with me; so, tenderly cared for by my ayah, I grew from a sickly babe into a white-faced, elfish-looking child. I could remember being taken to kiss my father as he lay dying; and then all faded away that was not ships, and sea, and being in a strange new world, with nothing to cling to but the black face of the ayah, and the bright-coloured cotton scarf about her neck. But the ayah was sent away, and then life resolved itself, for me, into Whitegates, and Aunt Janet's spectacles, and Nannie, and the black kitten, and the squirrel in the tall dark pine-tree.

A strange, imaginative, lonely child, I grew, with the passing years, into peaceful solitary maidenhood, almost wholly without companions of my own age; yet not ill-educated, for the manse was my school-room, and the minister my master.

I should like to bring before my readers a vivid picture of this well-beloved guide of my youth. A stern old Calvinist, of like nature with the sturdy Covenanters, his ancestors, was the white-haired minister, the Reverend Keane Malcombe. A man of simple, unpretending sanctity, of Christian singleness of heart, and yet a man of deep and varied culture, and with an artist mind to see and note all the beauties of earth and sky. He taught me to know the name of every flower in the fields, and

every bird that peopled the woods; and sometimes we read together that wondrous "Cosmos," wherein the name of God is not once written, and yet where the mind is led, as it were, into the very presence of the divine Creator. Strange studies these for a girl! Yet, in the years to come, I was often grateful that I had been thus led to find in books my best companions, and, in the study of nature, the best consolation for a lonely life.

Thus my early girlhood passed away without "love," in its fullest sense, being to me more than a name. My master had led me in such "ways of pleasantness and paths of peace," he had shown me so well how to gather content from all the beauties of this fair world, and led me by the teachings of an intellect pure and true, to give, even to the common things of life, a beauty beyond mere surface thought, that the need of some stirring romance, to make life worth the living, had never come to me, as it comes to so many women.

The minister was now getting an old man; but if he leaned a trifle more heavily on his stout stick as we wandered along the lanes, his eye brightened no less than heretofore at the sight of some new floral treasure, or some feathered novelty.

The manse was a low, unpretending building, with those diamond-paned windows now so seldom seen, and near it stood the kirk and the burial-ground, where flowers bloomed almost as plentifully as in the manse garden itself.

Now the Kirk of Scotland is not remarkable for the floral decoration of her burial-places, and the minister was thought to have some "foreign notions" on this point. Yet none murmured.

The brightest and most cheery little room in the manse had been for years devoted to the use of a patient, uncomplaining sufferer, once the minister's active, busy helpmate. To his "Lizzie's" bedside was taken every new-found flower, and here, too, he sought wise and loving words of sympathy in the holiest duties and anxieties of his calling.

The manse had always been a childless home, and the minister was wont to say, "One corner of our hearts was empty, but little Mab was sent from across the seas to fill it."

Truly a pleasant resting-place had I found that "empty corner."

I have no more happy, restful, tender memories than those of the quiet hours spent with my books in the minister's study.

How the simple room told the story of his life and character! A large Bible lay open on his desk, and on the table by the window, where the light was clearest, countless specimens of field-flowers, dried, and neatly fastened upon paper. Over the mantel-shelf hung a print of Christ blessing little children. This picture had been the occasion of some exercising of spirit to various members of his congregation.

"Surely," reasoned they, "it pointed to episcopal leanings—nay, even worse tendencies!" But none had the hardihood to broach the subject to Keane Malcombe, and in time it grew to be an understood thing that the picture in the study was to be looked upon as the foible of a great mind, and to be respected accordingly, though by no means to be taken as a precedent for others to follow. To me the picture was a revelation.

That face, full of divine pity, bending down in unutterable love, drew me with an irresistible force; I used to look up at it, standing on tiptoe and holding by the mantel-shelf, and think that just all that love and pity was what He felt for me when they sent my ayah away, and left me a little desolate mortal, alone in the new world of Whitegates. My master told me "that none were ever sad and lonely now, but the same pity and love looked down upon them from the same divine face, though they could not see it." Thus I gathered the herbs that were to be for my healing in the time of need.

In my childish days, Abbeylands, with its long rows of closed windows and its silent gardens, was a delicious mystery to me—a kind of respectable Castle of Otranto; and when first Aunt Janet told me of the beautiful lady who once lived there, I immediately invested her with all the bewitching attributes of a fairy princess; but, as I grew up to years of greater discretion, these fabulous ideas faded, and a pitiful interest in the unknown Châtelaine of Abbeylands took their place. A widow, with one child, she had been for long years a wanderer in strange lands. People said she would come back when the young heir was of age; meanwhile, he was learning grand things in foreign parts, and Abbeylands was desolate.

About two years before this story opens, all my romance and dreams of the widowed owner of Abbeylands were tested by the sudden appearance of the reality. A flutter of preparation made itself felt at the "big

house," a thrill of excitement pervaded the village, and then Mrs. Forsythe arrived in our midst.

It is seldom enough that reality comes up to expectation; but, in truth, my best conceptions of her had fallen short of the truth.

She was that rare thing, a faultlessly-beautiful woman—a woman with such a perfect face, that not even sadness could mar or detract from its beauty.

Time had borne her some distance from her sorrow, yet not so far but that its shadow still fell upon her. The soft dark eyes had a weary look; and here and there silver threads mingled with the silken hair, raised high on either temple and carried back beneath a white lace fichu.

I may truly say Mrs. Forsythe was my "first love," for the absorbing affection sometimes felt by a younger woman for her older friend has in it much of the devotion, though it may lack the passion, of love in its closest sense. She was to me something, the like of which I had never hoped to come across in my quiet uneventful life, and the finding of her was an epoch in my existence.

Why Mrs. Forsythe was drawn to me I cannot say; but, in a shorter time than I could have believed it possible, I was her constant companion—her shadow, her humble, loving worshipper.

If Aunt Janet had any jealous twinges about my time and thoughts being so withdrawn from her and Whitegates, I think her conscious pride in the fact of "her niece" being "fille de la maison" at the "big house" acted as a salve; and as to my faithful Nannie, she honestly believed I had only to be seen to be appreciated by the world in general.

"There's nane need be ashamed of ye, Miss Mabel, at kirk or market," she would say, in innocent belief in my transcendent charms; whereas I had overheard Aunt Janet lamenting over my being "just an ordinar' body, and no like a true-born Fraser" (for Aunt Janet was a "Fraser," and it was noted, in this distinguished clan, that the men were all stalwart Highlanders, and the women "braw lassies"). It may, therefore, be imagined I was insignificant, at the best, and a degenerate specimen of the Fraser clan.

Mrs. Forsythe admired and appreciated my master sufficiently to satisfy even me, and that circumstance formed no small portion of the bond of love between us.

Sometimes my dear companion would touch lightly upon her past life, but never more than touch. I do not think the sore was healed enough to bear much handling, even from the most loving hands.

She spoke much of her absent Donald. He was her darling, her one earthly treasure; she was proud of his talent, and held his love for her to be a most precious thing.

And now, this first day of early spring, the heir was coming home; and even as I went down the long lane, I knew Donald Forsythe was on his way to Abbeylands.

Filled with thoughts half sad, half joyous, I went on my way. I asked myself, almost for the first time in my life, if that life had not been somewhat wasted, inasmuch as it had been without that which seemed to make life sweet to most women. I rebelled in my heart against the signs of spring all around me, yet I rejoiced for the joy of the loving heart, that I knew was awaiting the coming of her darling.

Through the village, past the manse, where a kindly face smiled at me from the study-window, and then I came to the quaint, high-stepped stile that led into the Abbeylands cornfields. This stile was like a little ladder on one side, and a bigger ladder on the other, where the fall was deepest. Few of the village children attained any age to speak of, without coming to grief by falling from its tempting bars.

Mrs. Forsythe was on the terrace when I reached Abbeylands, and as I looked at her, her beauty struck me as it were afresh, for I had never seen it so adorned as now, to do honour to the coming of the heir.

The rich purple velvet of her dress set off to exquisite advantage the pure, creamy tint of her perfect face; an unwonted gladness was in her eyes, and a smile upon her lips. "I cannot give you a hand in welcome, Mab," she said as I mounted the broad stone steps, and she looked down at her hands filled with sweet flowers and delicate ferns, gathered from the greenhouses hard by. "But you are very welcome, dear, and just in time to help me to decorate the rooms, to do due honour to my boy. I shall really be afraid to face Archie, after robbing his treasures in this way!"

Her happiness seemed such a holy thing, and so complete in itself, that I suddenly

felt as though I had been in some way guilty for intruding upon it.

I tried to put this feeling into words.

"I don't quite think I ought to have come here this morning—you would, I am sure, rather have been left alone; but I did not think of it; and—it is my birthday; and I wanted 'a greeting.'"

We had entered the house, and she laid her head of flowers down on the hall-table, put a soft hand on either shoulder, and bent down to my small altitude, and kissed me tenderly.

"There is my 'greeting,' child," she said; "and almost more than you deserve, too, for daring to speak as though you could be unwelcome."

"You are very good to me," and here I felt a kind of choke in my voice. "I have been thinking myself into a fit of the vapours all the way here. You see I feel so old!—thirty to-day!"

"Are you so much?" she said; "no one would think it, you are such a little bit of a thing—a real 'Queen Mab!' Why, when you are a very old woman you will be like a dear old fairy godmother! I, you know, shall develope into a large, stately dame, and go to visit my tenants leaning on Donald's arm. What nonsense you make me talk, Mabel! I, the mother of a son twenty-one years of age, should be more staid!"

I took up a great bunch of dewy snow-drops.

"Where shall I put these pretty things?"

"Take them to my dressing-room," she said, "they are favourites with Donald, and he comes to pay me cosy visits there, in the 'gloaming,' as you thorough Scotch folks so prettily call it."

In her bed-room, through which I had to pass, I paused, and stood with the snow-drops in my hand before the picture of her son.

This is what I saw.

A boy, with clean-cut features, and laughing eyes, dark grey, with long black lashes, a mass of dark wavy hair, falling slightly over the square brow, and the greatest beauty of the face lying in the perfect mouth with its short upper lip, and sweet smile. Such was Donald Forsythe, the widow's only son, the heir of all the broad abbey lands.

The light fell full upon his winsome face, and the picture was so placed that every morning, when the mother woke, her boy was smiling down upon her.

As I held the flowers in my hands, the

merry eye seemed looking into mine, and the smiling mouth ready to break into happy laughter.

I had seen that picture often before. I was destined to see it yet again, to look at it, not smiling as now, with flower-laden hands, but through a mist of blinding tears, and with a passion of pain at my heart. Oh, when we touch the first, fresh link of some new chain that is to lead us to a baptism of suffering, well is it that no voice can tell us of the rocks that will tear our bleeding feet, the "thick darkness" through which we shall have to pass on the road, along which we are then taking our first step!

ROYAL OMENS, SIGNS, AND PORTENTS.

SHAKESPEARE makes Claudius speak of the divinity that "doth hedge a king," as an effectual means of defeating treason; and Beaumont and Fletcher have availed themselves of the same thought when they represent Amintor, in *The Maid's Tragedy*, as declaring to the monarch who figures so villainously in that work—

I fear not swords; for as you are mere man
I dare as easily kill you for this deed
As you dare think to do it. But there is
Divinity about you that strikes dead
My rising passions: as you are my king,
I fall before you and present my sword
To cut mine own flesh, if it be your will.

At this time, and long afterwards, royalty was most superstitiously regarded; the king was deemed on all hands to be something more than mortal; in right of his office and his descent, he was clothed with certain supernatural attributes. The English king described in *Macbeth* well represents this old-world monarch, with special mention of his supposed gift of healing by the mere touch of his hand:

There are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure; their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.
A most miraculous work in this good king,
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits Heaven
Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people
All swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks
Put on with holy prayers; and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a Heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
And speak him full of grace.

It has been alleged that this account of the king's miraculous powers was inserted

in the tragedy, to gratify the vanity of James the First. The "golden stamp," we may note, was a coin called an angel, of the value of ten shillings, bearing on one side a figure of St. Michael, and on the other a representation of a ship in full sail. The king, in pursuance of the ritual prescribed by the Prayer-book, crossed with a golden angel the sore of the sick person brought to him, while the last clause of the gospel of the office was repeated. This done, the surgeon was to lead away the sick, and the chaplain finished the service. The patient was to have the angel bored, and a ribbon being drawn through it, to hang it about his neck, and to wear it "until he should be full whole," which might, of course, be a very long while. In the Duke of Buckingham's play, *The Rehearsal*, when Prince Prettyman talks of going to the wars, Tom Thimble observes: "I shall see you come home like an angel for the king's evil, with a hole bored through you." "An ugly office, and a simple one," says Mr. Pepys, who saw the king "heale" at Whitehall in 1661.

It does not appear that any English sovereign, after Anne, attempted to heal by touch, and Dr. Johnson is reputed to have been one of the last patients who tested the efficacy of the old superstitious process. He was but five years old, however, when Anne died in 1714, and of that sovereign he could only state that he had "a confused, but somehow a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds, and a long black hood." It need hardly be stated that Johnson was not healed by the royal touch, although there was but little lack of faith in his case. Boswell ventured indeed to banter his distinguished friend in regard to the efficacy of the healing, observing, with allusion to the Jacobite principles, in which Johnson had been educated, and to which he long remained faithful, "his mother did not carry him far enough. She brought him from Lichfield to London, but she should have taken him to Rome," i.e., to the Pretender.

The Hanoverian monarchs did not affect to cure by royal touch; nevertheless, their partisans claimed for them that miraculous power, and for some time, in defiance of the conviction of the Jacobites, that the gift had departed with the Stuarts, the Prayer-book continued to present, as an important part of its contents, "The Office of the Healing," until George the First finally ordered the omission of the

form. The History of England of Thomas Carte, published between 1747 and 1755 (of which Warton said, "You may read Hume for his eloquence, but Carte is the historian for facts"), incurred much reprobation, owing to the author's affirming that the royal gift of healing was inherent in the Pretender. The Corporation of London withdrew their subscription and patronage, the author's credit was destroyed, and his undertaking left incomplete; not, let it be understood, because of his credulity as to the magic of the royal touch, but because he believed that extraordinary power to be vested in the house of Stuart, and to be absolutely denied the Hanoverian monarchs.

"The curing of the king's evil, by the touch of the king, does much puzzle our philosophers," writes Aubrey, "for whether our kings were of the house of York or Lancaster, it did the cure, i.e., he is careful to add, "for the most part;" and he relates how, when Charles the First was prisoner at Carisbrook Castle, "there was a woman touched by him, who had the king's evil in her eye, and had not seen in a fortnight before, her eyelids being glued together; as they were at prayers (after the touching) the woman's eyes opened. Mr. Seymour Bowman, with many others, were eye-witnesses of this." He further states that in Somersetshire, according to general repute, "some were cured of the king's evil by the touch of the Duke of Monmouth." It would seem, indeed, that this peculiar gift of healing pertained not only to kings and to pretenders to the crown, but was often possessed by any one happening to be a seventh son, born in wedlock, and with no daughter interrupting the line of sons. Aubrey, on the authority of our old English chronicles, mentions a child born in Kent, in the reign of King Henry the Third, who, "at two years old, cured all diseases:" certainly, a very surprising child. Another case, that of "Samuel Scot, seventh son of Mr. William Scot, of Hedington, in Wiltshire," Aubrey states on his own authority, being "very well satisfied of this relation, for I knew him very well, and his mother was my kinswoman." Samuel Scot, it appears, as a child, performed wonderful cures by touching only, "viz., as to the king's evil, wens, &c., but as he grew to be a man, the virtue did decrease, and had he lived longer, might perhaps have been spent." Not every seventh son, however, might

expect to be thus gifted. For a boy, also a seventh son, employed as a servant by Samuel Scot's father, could work no cures at all. And sometimes a dead hand has wrought as many marvels as the living fingers of kings, princes, pretenders, and seventh sons. Aubrey instances the case of a certain painter of Stowel, in Somersetshire, near Bridgewater, who suffered from "a wen in the inside of his cheek, as big as a pullet's egg, which, by the advice of one, was cured by once or twice touching or rubbing with a dead woman's hand (*é contra*, to cure a woman, a dead man's hand); he was directed first to say the Lord's Prayer, and to beg a blessing. He was perfectly cured in a few weeks. I was at the man's house who attested it to me, as also to the Reverend Mr. Andrew Paschal, who went with me."

The gift of healing by touch was supposed to have descended to our princes from Edward the Confessor. But the miraculous power was not peculiar to British royalty; it has been shown that the kings of France long claimed to be similarly endowed, albeit they employed a less presumptuous form of words, and when they laid hands upon the sick and suffering, said simply, "*Le Roi te touche; Dieu te guérisse.*" Now and then the remedy was as fatal as the disease, as upon the occasion described by Evelyn, when (in 1684) "there was so great a concourse of people, with their children to be touched for the evil, that six or seven were crushed to death, by pressing at the surgeon's door for tickets."

While kings were thus haloed by superstition, it is not surprising that omens, and signs, and portents, were found to be constantly attendant upon them; that men perceived marvels in very simple matters, and gave way to fear, and trembling, and foreboding, upon the slightest provocation. Charles the First seems to have been the object of much consideration of this kind; his misfortunes and his fate appealed strongly to the imaginative and the credulous, and inclined men strongly to the seeing of visions, and the dreaming of dreams, and generally to the acceptance of the prodigious. Mr. Carlyle reckons the execution of Charles to be "the most daring action any body of men, to be met with in history, ever, with clear consciousness, set themselves to do. . . . The action of the English regicides did in effect strike a damp like death through the heart of flunkysim universally in this

world. Whereof flunkysim, cant, cloth-worship, or whatever ugly name it have, has gone about incurably sick ever since; and is now at length in these generations very rapidly dying." It was observed, that as the body of the beheaded king was borne from St. George's Hall, to the west end of the chapel royal, the weather underwent a change; the sky, which had been serene and clear, became overcast, and presently the snow fell so fast that the black velvet pall was all white ("the colour of innocence," notes Sir Thomas Herbert in his record of the two last years of the king's reign), "being thickly covered with snow." It was then remembered that Charles had been styled "the white king," from having, as many stated, worn robes of white satin when he was crowned in Westminster Abbey in 1625, in lieu of the purple robes worn by his predecessors at their coronation. Subsequently, handkerchiefs dipped in his blood were supposed to possess the healing virtue he had been credited with. Macaulay has ascribed to the king's "Vandyke dress, handsome face and peaked beard," and to consideration for his domestic virtues, the sympathy and loyalty with which his memory has been so long regarded. The face, with its livid complexion, cold weak eyes, and prolonged nose, is not perhaps so specially comely; but what may be called the Vandyke accessories are most admirable. From the first, however, Charles was thought to have an ominous look. Ben Jonson, in his masque of *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, made one of the characters say of Prince Charles:

How right he doth confess him in his face,
His brow, his eye, and every mark of state;
As if he were the issue of each grace,
And bore about him both his fame and fate.

There seemed a prophetic ring about the lines. Bernini, the famous Italian sculptor, employed to execute a bust from Vandyke's well-known portrait, representing the full front, three-quarter, and profile aspects of the king, is reported to have said that he "had never seen any face which showed so much greatness and, withal, such marks of sadness and misfortune." "The sculptor found great fault with the forehead as most unfortunate." Aubrey further notes: "There was a seam in the middle of his forehead (downwards), which is a very ill sign in *Metoposcopia*."

A king's coronation is a recognised time for the occurrence of omens and presages. Mr. Pepys notes that, at the coronation of

Charles the Second, after the king had quitted the Hall, although for two days the weather had held up fair, "it fell a-raining, and thundering, and lightening as I have not seen it do for some years, which people did take great notice of; God's blessing on the work of these two days, which is a foolery to take too much notice of such things." Aubrey writes: "King Charles the Second was crowned at the very conjunction of the Sun and Mercury, Mercury being then in *Corde Solis*. As the king was at dinner in Westminster Hall, it thundered and lightened extremely. The cannons and the thunder played together." And Baxter, in his *Life*, mentions the same storm with reference to an earthquake that occurred at the coronation of Charles the First: "On April 23, 1661, was his majesty's coronation-day, the day being very serene and fair, till suddenly in the afternoon, as they were returning from Westminster Hall, there was very terrible thunder, when none expected it, which made me remember his father's coronation, on which, being a boy at school and having leave to play for the solemnity, an earthquake, about two o'clock in the afternoon, did affright the boys and all the neighbourhood. I intend no commentary," he notes, in conclusion, "but only to relate the matter of fact."

Sir Thomas Herbert seems to think that something of a supernatural character distinguished a journey he once made from the Isle of Wight to deliver "a gracious message," duly sealed up and directed to the Speaker of the House of Lords, pro tem., in London. Herbert had "much ado" to cross the sea from Cowes to Southampton; but the king, prisoner at Carisbrook, had ordered haste, so that the letter might be delivered before the House rose. No delay, therefore, was suffered, and, being landed, he immediately took post for London. But at a certain stage, "the postmaster, a malevolent person, having notice that the packet came from the king, and required extraordinary speed, mounted Mr. Herbert upon a horse that had neither good eyes nor feet, so as he usually stumbled very much, which, with the deep ways (being winter) and dark nights, in all probability might have abated his speed, but (through God's goodness) the horse (though at his full gallop most part of that twelve miles' riding) neither stumbled, nor fell, which at the next stage was admired."

Herbert also narrates a curious and

ominous incident which happened at Hurst Castle, Hants, during the king's sojourn there, as a prisoner on his road to London. "The room he usually eat in was neither light nor lightsome; at noonday (in that winter season) requiring candles, and at night he had his wax-lamp set, as formerly, in a silver bason, which illuminated his bed-chamber. . . . The late Earl of Lindsey, being one of the gentlemen of his majesty's bed-chamber, one night lying on a pallet by the king's bedside (not long before his leaving Oxford and going thence to the Scots) at the foot thereof (as was usual every night) was placed a lamp or round cake of wax, in a silver bason, set upon a stool; the earl, awaking in the night, observed the room to be perfectly dark, and therefore raising himself up, looked towards the lamp, and concluded that it might be extinguished by some water got into the bason by some crack; but not hearing the king stir he forbore rising, or to call upon those that lay in the next chamber to bring in another light, fearing to disturb the king's rest; and about an hour after that he fell asleep again, and awakened not till morning; but when he did awake he discerned the lamp bright burning, which so astonished him that, taking the boldness to call to the king (whom he heard, by his stirring, to be awake), he told him what he had observed; whereupon the king replied, that he himself, awakening also in the night, took notice that all was dark, and, to be fully satisfied, he put by the curtain to look at the lamp; but, some time after, he found it light, and concluded the earl was risen, and had set it upon the bason lighted again. The earl assured his majesty he had not. The king then said, he did consider it a prognostic of God's future favour and mercy towards him or his; that, although he was at that time eclipsed, yet either he or they might shine out bright again." It will be observed that there is really nothing more in this story than the commonplace incident of a lamp's burning for a while so feebly that the flame was judged to have expired, and of its presently reviving and shining brightly; but two hundred years ago prognostics were held to lurk in very trifling matters.

The execution of the king, as the historians relate, produced an extraordinary effect upon the nation. No doubt there was profound emotion, but it is difficult to believe with Hume that children came

prematurely into the world; that men and women "fell into convulsions or sank into such a melancholy as attended them to their graves; and that some, unmindful of themselves, as though they could not or would not survive their beloved prince, suddenly fell down dead."

A certain mystery has obscured the ultimate fate of Bernini's bust. It was supposed to have perished during the burning of Whitehall in 1697. But had it been permitted to remain there during the Civil War and the Protectorate? Those were iconoclastic times. There had been great destruction of royal property. All Charles's art treasures had been promptly brought to the hammer. The pictures, jewels, plate, and furniture of nineteen palaces had been hurriedly sold by auction, producing only one hundred and eighteen thousand pounds. The equestrian statue of the king, now to be seen at Charing Cross, was only preserved by being buried furtively by its purchaser, a loyal brazier, John Rivet by name, living at the Dial, near Holborn Conduit. Was Cromwell likely to preserve as an ornament of his palace the bust of his royal predecessor? Vertue was of opinion that the bust had certainly survived the Commonwealth, and probably also the fire. Sir John Stanley, the deputy chamberlain at the period of the fire, believed that the bust had been stolen some time before the palace was in flames. Sir John was dining in Craig-court, when the fire began at three o'clock in the afternoon. He ran to the palace and perceived only at that time some smoke issuing from a garret of one of the minor buildings. He found Sir Christopher Wren there with his workmen, and the gates all shut. Pointing to the bust he begged Sir Christopher to take care of that and the statues. Sir Christopher replied, "Take care of what you are concerned in, and leave the rest to me." It was not until five hours afterwards that the fire reached that portion of the building. But though the ruins were dug up, and the strictest search made, no fragment of marble was ever discovered. A marble figure of a crouching Venus in the same chamber was known to have been stolen; it was recovered by the Crown four years later. But of Bernini's bust no trace could be found; nothing more was ever heard.

Evil omens attended the commencement of the Long Parliament in 1641. The sceptre fell from the hands of the wooden figure of King Charles which adorned Sir

Thomas Trenchard's hall at Wullich in Dorset, as the family were at dinner in the parlour; Justice Hunt being one of the party, and confirming the truth of the story. And the picture of Archbishop Laud, which hung in his own closet, fell down, the string having snapped. The accident had nothing especially rare about it; but, happening when it did, was deemed portentous.

At King Charles's trial, the head of his staff or walking-cane fell off; "this, by some, was looked upon as a bad omen," writes Sir Thomas Herbert. Previously, when the high court of justice was voted in the Parliament House, as Berkenhead (the mace-bearer) took up the mace to carry it before the speaker, the top fell off, the fact being avowed to Aubrey "by an eye-witness then in the house."

A similar accident is said to have occurred at the coronation of James the Second. The top of his sceptre, the "fleur de lis," fell to the ground; and at that precise moment the royal standard, hoisted at the Tower amid the roar of cannon upon a signal given from Westminster Abbey, was so torn by the furious wind then blowing, that half of the flag was carried away into the Thames. Nor were these all the omens that were noted at the enthronement of James. The peers, who, in pursuance of ancient custom, were required to salute their new sovereign, discharged that duty with such clumsy zeal that "the crown was almost kissed from his head. An earl did set it right; and as he came from the abbey to Westminster hall, the crown tottered extremely." Meanwhile the canopy of cloth of gold, carried over the king's head by the wardens of the Cinque Ports, was so rent by the wind as he passed from the abbey to the hall, that it hung down very lamentably. "I saw it," notes Aubrey. The fireworks which were to be exhibited on the Thames in celebration of the event, suddenly exploded with alarming violence; "several spectators leaped into the river, choosing rather to be drowned than burned." In a yard on the bank of the river stood the coach and horses of my Lord Powys. "The horses were so frightened by the fireworks that the coachman was not able to stop them, but ran over one who with great difficulty recovered." The serious loss of life that occurred in Paris when the city was illuminated, and a grand display of fireworks exhibited, in celebration of the marriage of Louis the Sixteenth and

Marie Antoinette, might also be regarded as ominous—especially by those whose presentiments and predictions may be said to take an *ex post facto* form.

There were further evil omens noted in connection with the unfortunate James. When he was at Salisbury, in 1688, an iron crown upon the turret of the council-house was blown off. "This," says Aubrey, "has been often confidently asserted by persons who were then living." And when he first entered Dublin, after his arrival from France, in 1689, one of the gentlemen that bore the mace before him, stumbled, "without any rub in his way, or other visible occasion." But somehow the mace fell out of his hand, and the little cross upon the crown thereof stuck fast between two stones in the street. "This is very well-known all over Ireland, and did much trouble king James himself, with many of his chief attendants."

Crowns, and crosses, and flags seem indeed to have been very liable to the kind of misadventure that obtains ominous reputation. Colonel Sharrington informed Aubrey that when Charles the First raised his standard upon the top of the tower at Nottingham, "the wind blew it so the first night, that it hung down almost horizontal; which some did take to be an ill omen." So it was regarded with misgiving, when the cross that was wont to be carried before Cardinal Wolsey fell out of its socket, "and was like to have knocked the brains out of one of the bishop's servants. A very little while after came in a messenger, and arrested the cardinal before he could get out of the house."

Among coronation omens may be numbered the sudden darkness that occurred during the enthronement of William and Mary. This enabled the adherents of the Stuart cause, so tradition records, to take up the champion's gage, and fling down a gauntlet in its place, to challenge the title of the king and queen to the crown they had assumed. Similar legends, we may note, pertain to the coronation ceremonies of all the kings of the house of Hanover, so long as there remained a Stuart claimant of the throne. Sir Walter Scott has availed himself of a fable of this kind in his novel of *Redgauntlet*.

A "trivial prophesy," touching the kings and queens, and the prosperity of England, has been preserved by the great Lord Bacon, who heard it when he was a

child, and Queen Elizabeth "in the flower of her years."

When Hempe is span
England's done.

"Whereby, it was generally conceived that after the princes had reigned, which had the principal letters of that word Hempe (which were Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip, and Elizabeth), England should come to utter confusion, which is verified in the change of the name; for that the king's style is now no more of England but of Britain."

It is told of King William the Fourth that he much preferred his second name, Henry, and wished to be styled King Henry the Ninth, to establish his lawful right to a title which had been assumed by the Cardinal of York, the last of the Stuarts. The Privy Council discussed the question, but decided in favour of his being called King William. The king informed Miss Helen Lloyd, the governess of his younger children, that this decision had been mainly influenced by regard for an old prophecy, of which he had not previously heard, but which ran:

Henry the Eighth pulled down monks and their cells,
Henry the Ninth should pull down bishops and their bells.

The king did not know where this prediction or proverb was to be found. It has been proved, however, to be of ancient date, being contained in Sir John Harrington's *Brief View of the State of the Church of England*, written for the use of Prince Henry (the eldest son of James the First), and published in the year 1653.

A CHARMING FELLOW.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE," "MABEL'S PROGRESS," &c. &c.

CHAPTER LIX.

THERE was a momentary rustling, as if every person present had moved slightly, and then a deep hush. The silence seemed to last a long time; but, in fact, only a second or two elapsed before Powell, drawing up his tall lean figure to its utmost height, and pointing with outstretched hand full at Algernon, exclaimed with a kind of cry, "There is her murderer! Woe to the cruel, woe to the unrighteous man! Ye have ploughed wickedness; ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies!"

There arose a murmur, a movement, a confused sound of ejaculations. Algernon started up, and some one laid a hand on his shoulder and pushed him back into his seat. "Ask what he means," said Algernon; but his voice was so weak and faint that the words were not heard beyond the few persons who immediately surrounded him. He could scarcely grow paler than he had been from the beginning of the inquest, but a ghastly ashen-grey hue showed itself round his mouth. His lips were quite colourless. Terror, agonising terror, was in his heart. What did this preacher know? What had he seen? Had Castalia spoken and accused him before her death?

Anguish for anguish; perhaps he suffered at that moment as much as his victim had suffered when she felt the hand she loved send her to her death!

The movement and the murmur in the crowd were over in an instant. The coroner sternly commanded order. There was silence again, and the very air seemed charged with a horrible apprehension, which weighed upon every one as a coming thunderstorm oppresses the cowering birds.

"You must speak clearly and plainly, Mr. Powell," said the coroner in a severe tone. "State what grounds you have for this very extraordinary accusation. The evidence laid before us to-day goes to show that Mr. Errington did not see his wife since parting from her on the Monday night to go to London, until he was called on to identify her dead body at Duckwell Farm."

"He spoke with her in the meadow by the river's brink. She appealed to him; she implored him; she knelt to him. I saw her gestures. Then he hurled her down the steep bank into the water and fled away, leaving her to perish!"

A most profound sensation was caused by these words throughout the whole assembly. The jury looked at each other like men suddenly aroused from sleep. They seemed not only startled but scared. Indeed, a singular expression of disquietude appeared on every face—almost as if each individual in the crowd had felt himself accused. Before any further questions could be put to Powell, there was a stir and a commotion at the lower end of the room and a murmur of voices. Algernon Errington had swooned dead away. He must have fallen to the ground had he not been caught in the arms of his next neighbour, who happened to be Mr. Ravell, the draper. Some one in the crowd handed

a smelling-bottle to be held under his nose, and they cleared a little space around him to give him air, by the directions of Mr. Smith, the surgeon, who was at hand. It was proposed to carry him away out of the heat and the throng; but in less than a couple of minutes he revived, and immediately on recovering consciousness he desired to remain where he was. The terror of listening to what Powell said was not so appalling to his imagination, as the terror of fancying what he might be saying, when he (Algernon) should not be there to hear it.

Order being restored, the preacher's examination was continued. On being asked where he had been when the circumstances alleged to have taken place happened, he replied that he had been at some distance up the river, in the midst of a thick coppice which grew low down on the bank there. He had been near enough to see, although not to hear, the interview between young Errington and his wife. And to the questions what had brought him to that remote spot at such an hour, and why he did not make his presence known at once on seeing the deceased lady fall into the water, he answered, waving his hands to and fro, "I was prostrate on the earth—not praying, I may not pray, but suffering under the wrath of the powers of the air. The voices were very terrible on that day. They had aroused me from my bed. They had hunted me forth in the early morning. I had wandered for a long time—for hours, after your reckoning, but for years according to the time of the spirits."

"Mr. Powell," said Dr. Evans, sternly, "this will not do. You must speak less wildly. Remember what a tremendous responsibility rests on you after making such an allegation as you have made! Answer the questions put to you clearly and seriously."

But it was in vain that David Powell was catechised and cross-examined, in the endeavour to draw from him any more definite account of the events of that last morning of Castalia's life. He reiterated, indeed, his statement that Algernon had wilfully and forcibly thrust his wife down the bank into the river, and had then fled away at his utmost speed. And he added that he (Powell) had no thought of pursuing or calling to the murderer, being absorbed in his attempts to rescue the drowning woman. He persisted, too, in declaring that Castalia had been willing, nay, wishful, to die. She had not

struggled. She had not cried out. She had not tried to reach his outstretched hand. She had closed her eyes, and given herself up to the power of the death-cold waters. So far he was coherent and consistent; but when he endeavoured to describe how or why he had found himself on that spot at that hour, he wandered off into the wildest statements, and grew ever more and more excited. His face flushed. His eyes blazed. His voice rose almost to a scream. He broke into a torrent of words, standing up in face of the crowd and emphasising his discourse with strange violent gestures. "I will declare the truth," he exclaimed. "I will cry aloud, and spare not. Now, therefore be content; look upon me, for it is evident unto you if I lie!" Then with a sudden change of tone, sinking his voice to a hoarse, hollow monotone, and gazing straight before him with wide, horror-stricken eyes, he added, "Let me speak, let me confess the truth, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death. A land of darkness as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness."

A shudder ran through the audience. The preacher seemed to hold them in a spell. No voice was raised to interrupt him. Many persons turned pale as they listened. But on one face in the crowd the colour faintly dawned again. In one breast the preacher's voice giving utterance to the awful and glowing imagery of the Hebrew of old time, awoke something like a sensation of relief and comfort. Algernon Errington felt the life-blood pulsing warmly again in his veins. This Methodist man was mad—clearly mad! What was his testimony worth?

Powell went on, speaking still more brokenly and incoherently. "I am a castaway," he said. "I declare it before you all. Some of you have listened to my ministrations in other days. I spoke then of assurance—of Christian perfection. Those words were vain. There are but the elect and the reprobate, and unto the number of those latter am I doomed. I have long known it and struggled against the knowledge, but I declare it to ye now as a testimony."

The coroner recovered his presence of mind. In truth he had been so absorbed in studying David Powell with the professional interest of a doctor and a psychologist, that he had suffered him to ramble on thus far unchecked. But now he broke

in upon him abruptly. "We cannot listen to this sort of thing, Mr. Powell," he said. "All this has no bearing on the present inquiry." Then he said a few words as to the desirability of an adjournment. Mr. Errington might wish to call some other witnesses. Powell had acknowledged that he had been too far distant to hear a word of the conversation he alleged to have taken place between the husband and wife. It was possible, therefore, that he had been too distant to see the two persons, with sufficient distinctness to swear to their identity. Some more particular testimony might be obtained as to the precise hour at which the deceased lady had been last seen alive, and as to what her husband had been doing at that time. Upon this, Algernon Errington arose in his place and said in a clear, though slightly tremulous voice, "For myself, I desire no adjournment. But I should like to put a few questions to this witness."

There was a sudden hush of profound attention. David Powell still stood up in face of the assembly. He was rocking himself to and fro in a singular, restless way, and muttering under his breath very rapidly. It was observable, too, that his eyes seemed continually attracted to one point in the room just behind Algernon Errington. Every now and then he passed his hands over his eyes, as if to obliterate, or shut out, some painful sight, but he did not turn his head away; and the next instant after making that gesture, he would stare at the same point again, with an expression of intense horror. Algernon waited for an instant before speaking. Then he said in such a tone as one uses to attract the attention of a very young child, "Mr. Powell, will you try to listen to me?"

The preacher immediately looked full at him, but without replying. Algernon did not meet his eye, but turned his face aside towards the coroner and the jury. He looked at them with an appealing glance, and a slight movement of his head in the direction of Powell. Then he resumed:

"The accusation you have brought against me is so overwhelming, so amazing, that it is not very wonderful if I feel almost stunned and dizzy. How such a notion ever entered your brain Heaven only knows! I deny it completely, unequivocally, solemnly. To me it seems that such a denial must be unnecessary. The thing is so monstrous! But will you try to answer one or two questions with some calmness? How long had you been

in the copse before you saw my wife walking by the river-side?"

Powell shook his head restlessly, and passed his hand over his forehead with the action of brushing something off. "I was called out before the dawn," he said. "The voices bade me go forth. They sounded like brazen bells in the silence, beating and quivering here," and he pressed his fingers on his temples.

"You hear voices which are unheard by other people, then?"

"Often. Every day. Every hour."

"Tell me—do you not sometimes see forms that other persons cannot see?"

Powell started, trembled violently, and looked at Algernon with an expression of bewildered terror. But it was at the same time manifest that some gleam of reason was struggling against the delusions in his mind. He felt and perceived dimly, as one perceives external circumstances through sleep, that a trap was being laid for him. The pathetic questioning look in his eyes, as he vainly tried to recover the government of his mind, was intensely painful. For a second or two, he remained silent with parted lips and clenched hands, like a man making a violent and supreme effort. It seemed as if in another instant he might succeed in gaining sufficient mastery over himself to reply collectedly. But Algernon did not give time for such a chance to happen. He repeated his question more eagerly and loudly, looking at the preacher almost threateningly as he spoke.

"Tell me, Mr. Powell—and remember what a responsibility you have assumed in making this accusation—tell me truly whether you do not see visions—figures of men and women, that other people cannot see? Don't forms appear before your eyes and vanish again as suddenly? Have you not told your landlady, Mrs. Thimbleby, as much on many occasions? How can you dare to assert with confidence, that from the distance you say you were at, you could distinguish my face and that of my wife? All your description of her violent gestures, and kneeling on the ground, and clasping her hands—does not that seem more like the delusions of fancy than the information of your sober senses?"

Algernon spoke with indignant heat and rapidity—a calculated heat, a purposed rapidity meant to have a confusing effect

on the preacher, and which had that effect; but which also excited a sympathetic indignation in many of the auditors. Powell looked wildly around him, and clasped his hands above his head.

"You must put one question at a time, Mr. Errington," said Dr. Evans.

"Then I put this question: David Powell, do you, or do you not, see visions and faces and figures that the rest of the world is as unconscious of, as of the voices that called you out on to Whitmeadow that morning that my poor wife was drowned?"

Powell, with his eyes still fixed on the same point that he had been gazing on so long, suddenly cried out with a loud voice, "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit! God forbid that I should justify you! Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. It is there—there behind his shoulder. It has been holding me with the power of its eyes. Oh, how dreadful are those eyes, and that ashen-grey face! Look, behold! the Lord has brought a witness from the grave to testify to the truth! See, behold! Can you not see her? Look where she stands in her cold wet garments, with the water dripping from her hair! She points at him—oh most horrible!—the drowned woman points her cold finger at her murderer!" He stretched out his arms towards Algernon, and then with one bound leaped shrieking into the midst of the crowd.

A dozen hands were put forth to hold him. He struggled with the tremendous strength of insanity; but was at length forcibly carried out of the room a raving maniac.

After that there were not many words of an official nature spoken in the room. The inquest was adjourned to the following day, and the assembly dispersed to carry the account of the strange scene that had happened, all over Whitford and its neighbourhood.

NEXT WEEK WILL BE COMMENCED

A NEW SERIAL STORY.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD.

Author of "Never Forgotten," "The Second Mrs. Tillotson," &c. &c.

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